



NOTES FROM THE:

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Cost & Economics

by Mr Joseph T. Kammerer

Cost Estimating Activities. Our people at the Air Force Cost Analysis Agency (AFCAA) have been busy working with the F-22, MILSATCOM, RTIP, and various other program offices to develop cost estimates for acquisition programs that are meeting milestones or going through program reviews. Although our folks have done a super job of meeting the demand for cost estimating services, I am concerned in our long-term ability to continue doing so. One reason for my concern is our dwindling organic cost estimating capability. We're addressing this problem in a number of ways, one of which is the Maintain/Enhance Cost Estimating in the Air Force Reinvention Team. The team is challenged to redesign cost estimating policies, processes, and resources to ensure quality cost products. Your comments and suggestions could be very useful to this effort, and I encourage you to send them to us.

FM Web Site. On 1 June 1999, we transferred management responsibility for the SAF/FM web site to the Air Force Cost Analysis Agency. In conjunction with this transfer, we began a redesign of the web site to make it more user friendly and aesthetically pleasing.

So far we're pleased with the results. We devised and implemented standard formats for all pages to give the site a consistent look and feel. We also added new navigation tools to make it easier to find content and improve browsing through the various pages. These new devices include a tabbed navigational bar at the top of the page and a general topic button bar on the left side of the page. A search page was added to make it easier to find specific content. We are actively converting all file formats to web-standard .html or .pdf files as appropriate for the content; this should significantly improve the user's experience while navigating the site. To make sure you can access it, we made a concerted effort to ensure all content and graphics accommodate users with 28.8-modems and 800x600 screens.

In addition, we've added several enhancements to the FM web site. For instance, we developed on-line quizzes based on questions from articles in this magazine. Upon successful completion of a quiz, the user will get a certificate that may be used to gain professional development credits. To maintain our FM family ties, we added base-level comptroller organizations from around the world to our hot links page. We even worked with the SAF/FM Professional Development team to redesign the Professional Development and

Mentorship pages to make them more useful to the entire FM community. Finally, to make sure we're meeting your needs, we have added an on-line survey so you can immediately give us your feedback about the web site.

Our redesign is an ongoing effort to provide the FM community with the most useful and up-to-date site possible. The site will continue to evolve based on user input, new content, and advancements in technology. Your comments and ideas are welcome, so please fill out our on-line survey, or e-mail us at: saffm.webmaster@pentagon.af.mil.

Air Force Total Ownership Cost (AFTOC) Management Information System. During the past year, we have been developing AFTOC in order to provide our AF managers comprehensive and timely cost information. We are happy to report that AFTOC reached initial operational capability on 1 October 1999 and will be fully operational by 1 October 2000.

We recognize the need for the widest possible dissemination of cost information to users with an official need for cost data. We are committed to meeting this need and to date have provided unlimited AFTOC access to all DoD agencies, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), and nonmanufacturing consultants. In addition, we will provide manufacturing support contractors access to historical, current, and limited out-year information.

Take a look at one of our AFTOC web sites at <http://www.aftoc.com> or <http://aftoc.hill.af.mil> and see what AFTOC has to offer. On-line accessibility has been improved by the addition of our second site, which should greatly enhance accessibility and downloading times. The AFTOC information focuses on major Air Force systems such as aircraft, space, missiles, munitions, and MILCON.

If you would like to learn more about how to benefit from AFTOC, training can be arranged for your organization. In addition, the AFTOC program office will be hosting regular Users Group Meetings. The first of these was held in Columbus OH last November, and was attended by over 70 AFTOC users. In the meantime, check out the AFTOC web site and see why it was awarded the USD Comptroller's Award for Innovative Use of Technology to Improve Financial Management.